

With nearly 750,000 pregnancies a year, teen pregnancy is a critical public health issue that costs our country \$10.9 billion annually. Contributing to the seriousness of this issue is that 82 percent of these pregnancies are unplanned.

While it is true our Nation has made progress in reducing the rate of teen pregnancy, the fact remains that many minority communities still have disproportionately high rates. For example, among all Latina and African American girls, over half will get pregnant at least once before age 20, compared to 19 percent of Caucasian non-Hispanic girls.

Giving birth during these teenage years increases the risk of infant mortality, premature birth, complications, and low birth weight. Also of great concern is the fact that teen pregnancies can lead to significant social, educational, and financial burdens to families and to our country.

Research tells us that girls who become pregnant during adolescence are less likely to finish school, have higher rates of unemployment, and a greater dependence on public assistance. In addition to these tragic consequences, many young girls in physically abusive relationships are three times more likely to become pregnant than non-abused girls.

While there is no simple solution to address teen sexual behavior, it is possible to reduce teen pregnancy with a strategy of sexual health education that takes into account cultural and linguistic differences.

My bill is designed to do just that.

The Communities of Color Teen Pregnancy Prevention Act will help reduce the disturbing rates of teen pregnancy in minority communities by supporting new and existing teen pregnancy prevention program interventions with a focus on strengthening community-based organizations, by reinforcing our multimedia campaigns to provide public health education, by increasing awareness about teen pregnancy prevention and healthy relationships, by enhancing research in communities of color that examine factors contributing to disproportionate high rates of teenage and unintended pregnancy, and by examining the role violence and abuse play in the decisions young people make about relationships, sex, pregnancy and childbearing.

Mr. Speaker, our daughters deserve equal opportunities to build a bright future. By preventing teen pregnancies and promoting healthy relationships, we can pave the way for our teenage girls to blossom into women and mothers who have realized their full potential.

I strongly urge my colleagues to co-sponsor and help pass the Communities of Color Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Act of 2011.

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THE AMERICAN DREAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. RANGEL. I think I share the embarrassment of all of the Members of this great legislative body when it appears as though in our hands we have the ability to tell people, our creditors all over the country and the world, that for the first time in our Republic's history we are prepared to say we are not going to pay our debts.

We're not doing this because of some pledges that we've signed or because of some commitment that some Members have made that they will never, never, never do anything in support of our President. They would never talk about raising revenue; that they will never vote for a bill, whether it's a health bill, Social Security, Medicaid, Medicare, education. If the President supports it, they just don't want it.

I don't know how many Americans are really waking up this morning wondering exactly what would happen if we hold our country and our President hostage in order to reach just short political gain by people who have been recently elected and believe that compromise is unpatriotic instead of the legislative objective. But more important than the jobs that we would lose, the money that we would lose, the fact that government would have to be expanded and larger than it's ever been, what I'm really afraid of is that we lose the American Dream and create a scenario where that dream becomes a nightmare.

I don't know what it is that made America so great. I can't imagine what kind of dream that someone could have in Europe or a foreign country and just believe that making it to America would be better than staying in their own country with their own language and with their own race of people. Yet these tens of thousands of people were prepared, in many cases to risk their lives, to come to participate in that American Dream. I can't imagine how people who have been snatched from Africa and brought in chains in the bottom of vessels and were actually sold as property, and yet, instead of saying that they want to go back to Africa, they adopted our Bible, they adopted American customs. But most importantly, with all of the obstacles that they had to overcome, they adopted the American Dream.

What makes America so different is that we're one of the few countries that no matter what you look like or what your last name is, you can become an American. It's absolutely amazing the attractiveness that this dream has. Does it mean that a part of that dream is getting rich inheriting or getting property, having yachts and cars? No. It's having hope and dreams that you would be able to do better for yourself, your family, your kids, your grandkids, your community, and yes,

our great country. It means that you're willing to make sacrifices to help others because even though you never fulfill that dream, the dream never, never stops. There's always the ability to say that even though I didn't make it, my kid is going to go to school. Even though I didn't make it, there's going to be the possibility that I'll be living in a better world—a world of peace, a world of harmony, a world that makes no difference where you came from, that you have a dream that can be fulfilled in this country.

In other countries, you can't dream. How you're born is how you die. That's going to be your legacy. But in America, all of this is going to be placed in jeopardy because we don't have the guts to call out these people that obviously would rather have this dream shattered, not just for those people that are here but for people all over the world that watch us, and maybe they don't have the ability to come here and become a part of that American Dream still. Throughout the Middle East you see other people saying, I too can dream. I can be somebody.

Don't let that dream become a nightmare. Support our President, support our fiscal system, and support that dream.

IN MEMORY OF ED BELL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND) for 5 minutes.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, I come to the House floor to remember a great friend of mine who passed away last Tuesday. Thomaston City Councilman Ed Bell was a huge presence in Georgia and a devoted cheerleader for both Upson County, the city of Thomaston, and me.

Ed's life of tireless service started when he entered the U.S. Navy as an aviation ordnance man for 4 years during the Korean conflict. He continued with a sense of duty as an agent with State Farm Insurance, where he worked for 33 years and became a mentor for every State Farm agent under his direction. He was an agent's agent. The people that he insured knew that Ed was their agent and that he was there to protect their interest.

Ed was serving his fourth term on the Thomaston City Council and was truly dedicated to improving the lives of those in his community. If I ever found myself within 25 miles of Thomaston and made the mistake of not calling Ed, you can bet that he would somehow find out, and I would get an earful over the phone for not coming by to see him. And when you came to visit, you had to be sure to set enough time for Ed to introduce you to everyone in town, even though he had already done it many times before.

Even in the years later, Ed could wear a much younger man out with his enthusiasm for showing visitors around his beloved city, taking them through

the courthouse and around the city square. Ed really was "Mr. Thomaston." He was serving on my district's Small Business Committee as well as serving on the Thomaston-Upson Arts Council, the Upson County School Board, the Lions Club, and as a deacon at First Baptist Church of Thomaston. In recognition of all of Ed's work, he was rewarded the well-deserved Lifetime Achievement Award in 2009 from the Thomaston Chamber of Commerce. There is a laundry list of groups impacted by Ed's energy, and his involvement could never be replaced or forgotten by anyone.

The dedication Ed showed to his community pales in comparison to his dedication to family. My thoughts and prayers continue to be with Patricia, Ed's wife of 55 years; his three children, Dick, Debbie, and Nancy; and his six grandchildren, one of whom, William, is currently serving as an intern in my Newnan office. I cannot adequately express, Mr. Speaker, how grateful I am to Ed and his family for all that he has done for Georgia and for me.

So, Ed, until we meet again, we all miss you.

RATING THE CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION BUREAU

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, Members often come to the floor to talk about inspector general reports about agencies. And they are almost always critical of reports—reports that document shortcomings.

I'm very proud today to come to the floor to present excerpts from a joint report from the inspectors general of the Federal Reserve and the Treasury, in which they give a perfect set of marks to the new Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. Those two agencies looked into this agency. This is an agency that is being set up, under fire, unfortunately, in a somewhat unusual situation. And what the inspectors general reported is that they've done everything right; that "they identified and documented mission-critical activities and legislative mandates"; that the CFPB has developed and is implementing appropriate plans.

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They found that they are implementing appropriate plans that support ongoing operations as well as the transfer of employees and functions. They created several agency-wide documents that identified and tracked priorities. "We found that the agency has completed elements of its implementation plans and is making progress on others."

It is a joint report from two inspectors general that says they've done everything right; so I want to put that forward.

I want to put it forward, in part, because the individual most singularly

responsible for its great success, as she was for the idea and the creation of this agency, is Elizabeth Warren. Elizabeth Warren is one of the most able and dedicated individuals that I've ever encountered, who has dedicated herself to public service.

I regret very much that uninformed political opposition denied her the appointment to be the head of the agency, because she was not only the creator of this idea and a great partner for those of us on the Financial Services Committee—I see my colleague from Wisconsin (Ms. MOORE) who was an important part of this on the floor as we set this up in the face of significant opposition from vested interests and from ideologues—but in having had the idea, she then presided as the appointee of the Secretary of the Treasury and of the President to set this agency up in an extraordinary way. It is now, on the date when it takes off, ready to function. So she was not simply the creator of the idea and a great advocate, but she has shown herself to be a great administrator; and I regret the fact that she is not getting the appointment.

Although I have great confidence in the appointment of Mr. Cordray, whom the President appointed—he was an outstanding Attorney General, and he will be an outstanding Director—I want to reflect for just a minute on why we had such unwarranted opposition to a woman of great sense and of moderation, a woman who understands the market and was ready to help it function.

Part of it, I have to say, was gender bias. Along with Sheila Bair, recently departed as head of the FDIC, Ms. Warren encountered from some people—maybe unconsciously on their part—the notion that a very strong-willed woman with strong opinions might have a place but not in the financial sector; and I regret the loss of both of them. Yet there was also on the part of my most conservative Republican colleagues a recognition that she was a threat. I disagree with the position not to appoint her, but I give credit to President Obama and Secretary Geithner because they helped us get this agency created, and they did put her in the position and gave her their full backing to get it this far.

We would have ideologues here who would have people believe that government is always a bad thing, that less government is always better. We've seen it in this notion that we should cap government at X percent or Y percent—but I don't regard more fire-fighting as a bad thing; I don't think research into Alzheimer's and cancer is something we need to limit; I am not opposed to fixing bridges and highways. So this notion that government is always bad is mindless. There is a particular problem—and the private sector is a place that will create wealth, and I want us to do what we can to create the right conditions for the private sector, but there will be times when we need the government to protect people

from the private sector. That was the rationale of the Consumer Bureau.

The Consumer Bureau was set up—and it's a very popular entity—to protect individual citizens from abuses in the private sector. It's working well. It was well-designed, I must say. It was well set up, as the inspectors general have said. So I believe my most right-wing colleagues are terrified. It is their false notion that the government is always the source of the problem and the private sector is always the source of the good. Sometimes the government does create problems, and much of the time the private sector does create wealth, but there are times when the public sector has to protect people from the private sector. The Consumer Bureau was set up for that.

Now, the chairman of the Committee on Financial Services, Mr. BACHUS, said the other day, We don't worry about the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation of the Federal Reserve. What we worry about is an agency that exists solely to protect consumers. He is also the one who said that he thought the bank regulators were there to protect the banks, but we want to have a regulator there to protect the consumers.

So I salute Elizabeth Warren. I regret that she will not be able to continue the excellent work she has done, but it will live on as a tribute to both the idea she had, the political work she did with us to get it created, and the extraordinarily good administrative work she did in setting it up. I believe Mr. Cordray and the others will do a very good job and that we will soon have proof that the public sector can, in some cases, protect citizens from private sector abuses.

RESULTS OF THE JOINT REVIEW

CFPB IDENTIFIED AND DOCUMENTED MISSION-CRITICAL ACTIVITIES AND LEGISLATIVE MANDATES

Based on CFPB planning documents and interviews of agency officials, we found that CFPB identified and documented implementation activities critical to standing up the agency's functions and necessary to address certain Dodd-Frank Act requirements. In addition to activities necessary to establish the primary mission areas identified by the Dodd-Frank Act, such as supervision and enforcement, CFPB designed its organizational structure to account for other mandated functional units as well, including offices for financial education, fair lending, and service member affairs, among others. Moreover, CFPB identified the activities necessary to complete the transfer of employees and data from the transferring agencies in a timely manner. CFPB identified in its plans the need to establish a pay and classification system, information security processes, and financial management capabilities—areas required by the Dodd-Frank Act.

In addition, CFPB prepared documentation addressing critical activities vital to establishing a new agency. For example, CFPB's plans identified core business activities—such as securing office space, establishing procurement capabilities, building payroll and benefits functions, and designing an information technology infrastructure, among others.